



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **SAN DIEGO MEDICAL DIRECTOR RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

Mayor Jerry Sanders today announced that national recognition has come to San Diego's Medical Director, Dr. James Dunford, not once, but twice in as many weeks.

The U.S. Metropolitan Municipal EMS Medical Directors honored Dr. Dunford with the Michael Keys Copass Award at its conference last weekend. The Copass award is given to the Emergency Medical Services Medical Director who has "demonstrated longstanding service, contributions and leadership in the unique realm of out-of-hospital emergency care and, who has served as a role model not only for EMS personnel, but also for fellow 9-1-1 system medical directors across the nation."

"San Diego is fortunate to have someone as talented and dedicated as Dr. Dunford," the mayor said in making the announcement. "We've known for a long time that Jim is an exceptional medical director, and it's good to see others around the country appreciate him as well."

March 8<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Dunford will receive more recognition when he accepts the "A Home for Every American Award: Research" from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness in Washington, DC. This recognized Dunford's research of the San Diego Serial Inebriate Program (SIP). It is a program started in 2000 under the leadership of the police department, to try to stop the revolving door of homelessness and substance abuse. SIP offers people arrested for chronic public drunkenness the opportunity for treatment instead of jail time.

Dunford has completed a study following 529 people who were repeatedly arrested for public drunkenness over a three-year period. The health care costs alone totaled \$17.7 million. For 156 individuals who accepted an offer of treatment, their use of emergency and hospital services declined by fifty percent.

"SIP has been a tremendous success story, not only for the homeless, but for the taxpayers," Mayor Sanders said. "It has dramatically reduced the burden on emergency rooms and the amount of time

law enforcement has spent interacting with the chronically intoxicated. Those who go through the program successfully are able to lead better lives. SIP saves lives.”

Dr. Dunford deflected the praise, saying, “in all honesty, both awards reflect the talent of many people who have been working very hard with me for a long time to make emergency healthcare in this city and region second to none.”

Dunford has been the San Diego Medical Director since 1997, and is a professor of clinical medicine and surgery at UCSD.

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